

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 NSA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

OMB-01 /068 W

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P R 240845Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3001

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7493

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: USUN, UNGA, KS, KN

SUBJECT: ROK REACTION TO SECRETARY'S UN INITIATIVE ON KOREA

1. MOFA INTERNATIONAL TREATIES BUREAU DIRECTOR HAN WOO SUK TOLD POLCOUNS SEPTEMBER 23 THAT PRESIDENT PARK'S IMMEDIATE REACTION TO SECRETARY'S UN INITIATIVE ON KOREA, CALLING FOR A CONFERENCE OF THE FOUR POWERS DIRECTLY CONCERNED, AND TO QUESTION OF RESUBMISSION ROK APPLICATION FOR UN MEMBERSHIP HAD BEEN FAVORABLE. MESSAGES REGARDING THESE MATTER, INCLUDING ADVANCE TEXT SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL ON KOREA, HAD ARRIVED FROM KOREAN MISSION IN NEW YORK IN MIDST BLUE HOUSE SESSION WITH PRESIDENT SEPTEMBER 22. BEFORE ASSEMBLED GROUP PRESIDENT SAID THAT US PROPOSAL FOR CONFERENCE WAS GOOD ONE AND THAT REAPPLICATION FOR ADMISSION WAS, HE UNDERSTOOD, DRIVEN BY OTHER CONSIDERATIONS THAN KOREA. ACCORDING HAN, WHO WAS AMONG THOSE PRESENT, PRESIDENT MADE NO COMMENT ON SUGGESTION OF EXPANDED CONFERENCE ON KOREA BUT CLEARLY ACCEPTED THIS AS WELL.

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2. IN SUBSEQUENT LOWER LEVEL ROKG MEETINGS THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION REGARDING THESE QUESTIONS WITH EMPHASIS BEING ON HOW TO PLAY THEM IN ROK PRESS. THERE WAS CONCERN THAT KOREAN PEOPLE LED BY OPPOSITION

WOULD QUESTION NECESSITY OF REAPPLICATION FOR ADMISSION AND EXPANDED CONFERENCE PROPOSAL. IT WAS DECIDED TO HANDLE ADMISSION APPLICATION QUESTION BY SIMPLY DOWNGRADING PRESS COVERAGE. (HAN INTIMATED STRONGLY THAT ACTIVE PRESSURE HAD BEEN APPLIED TO DOWNGRADE POSSIBLE PRESS CRITICISM OF THIS MOVE.) AS REGARDS EXPANDED CONFERENCE PROPOSAL, THERE WAS CONCERN THAT IT EVOKED IDEA OF FOUR POWER GUARANTEE, WHICH KOREANS FIND HIGHLY SUSPECT, BUT FINAL CONSENSUS AT WORKING LEVELS WAS THAT THERE IS SLIM POSSIBILITY SUCH CONFERENCE WILL ACTUALLY MATERIALIZE, AT LEAST FOR SOME PERIOD OF TIME, THAT IN ANY EVENT SMALLER CONFERENCE OF FOUR POWERS, INCLUDING ROK, WOULD BE FIRST STEP, AND THAT THERE WOULD BE PLENTY OF TIME AND OPPORTUNITY TO DEFINE THE PURPOSES AND PARTICIPATION IN ANY LARGER CONFERENCE. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT HANDLING OF PRESS PLAY IN ROK SHOULD PRESENT NO REAL PROBLEMS.

3. IN FACT IT HAS NOT. PRESS PLAY HAS BEEN UNIVERSALLY RECEPTIVE TO PROPOSAL AND QUIET ON QUESTION OF ROK REAPPLICATION FOR UN MEMBERSHIP. BEARING OUT AUTHENTICITY OF THIS REACTION TWO SENIOR EDITORIAL WRITERS FROM HANKUK ILBO AND DONGA ILBO TOLD EMBOFF THAT WHILE THEY HAD BOTH BEEN TAKEN VERY MUCH BY SURPRISE BY THE SECRETARY'S INITIATIVE, THEY WERE SURE THAT IT WOULD BE WELCOMED AND APPLAUDED BY KOREANS IN GENERAL BECAUSE THEY YEARNED FOR A RESOLUTION OF THE CURRENT HOSTILITY BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH AND WANTED REUNIFICATION ABOVE ALL. ALTHOUGH NEWSMEN WERE THEMSELVES HOPEFUL THAT THE INITIATIVE WOULD PRODUCE SOME POSITIVE POLITICAL RESULT, THEY DID NOT EXPECT MUCH MORE THAN PROTECTION OF THE STATUS QUO, AND VIEWED U.S. PROPOSAL AS ESSENTIALLY TACTICAL MOVE TO BLUNT THE HOSTILE UN RESOLUTION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS, RESOLUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SEOUL07493
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750331-1092
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197509107/baaaausz.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971023
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PFOR, PORG, KN, KS, US, PFOR, PORG, UNGA, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: STATE INFO TOKYO
USUN N Y
CINCPAC
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006